eMarketing
The essential guide to digital marketing

4th Edition

Rob Stokes and the Minds of Quirk
What’s inside: An introduction to online advertising, a brief history following the development of the Internet and an exploration of how it works. We look at types of display advertising, payment models, advertising networks and exchanges. We also explore ad servers and what they do and learn more about how tracking works. We put it all together and take a brief look at the future of online advertising followed by an exploration into its advantages and disadvantages. Finally we include a summary, a look at the bigger picture and end off with a case study.
8.1 introduction

Online advertising is a term often used to describe almost everything covered in this textbook. Simply put, online advertising is advertising on the Internet. Online advertising encompasses adverts on search engine results pages (covered in the chapter Pay Per Click Advertising), adverts placed in emails and on social networks, and other ways in which advertisers use the Internet. However, this chapter focuses on display advertising: graphical and interactive online adverts that are displayed on web pages.

Whether online or not, the main objective of advertising is usually to increase sales. As well as this, advertising aims to increase brand awareness and share of voice in the marketplace. Advertising is based on the simple economics of demand and supply. Advertisers aim to stimulate a consumer need (demand) and then satisfy that need (supply).

Online display advertising began as simple hyperlinked images shown on websites and has since progressed to include video, sound and many other modern technologies. Images or video carry the message and a hyperlink takes the visitor to the advertiser’s desired landing page. Today, messages and interactions can be contained within the advertising display, without ever taking consumers to a landing page. Advertising, naturally, follows web-user behaviour. Advertisers want to place their adverts where potential customers will see them. This trend is resulting in the growth of advertising options using rich, interactive technology, such as games and video and social networking.

Although the Internet provides new scope for creative approaches to advertising, we see its true advantages when we realise how trackable (and therefore measurable) Internet advertising is. It is possible to track all interactions with the advert itself: how many impressions and clicks it received, post click and view data, and how many unique users were reached.

According to Eric Schmidt, CEO of Google “The Internet will transform advertising because of its trackability, not its beauty” (Lieb 2002).

8.2 key terms and concepts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>term</th>
<th>definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Animated GIF</td>
<td>A GIF (type of image file) which supports animations and allows a separate palette of 256 colors for each frame.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banner</td>
<td>An online advertisement in the form of a graphic image that appears on a web page.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Content network</td>
<td>Content websites that serve PPC adverts from the same provider, such as AdWords.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conversion</td>
<td>A visitor completing a target action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost per action (CPA)</td>
<td>Refers to the cost of acquiring a new customer. The advertiser only pays when a desired action is achieved (sometimes called cost per acquisition).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cost per click (CPC)</td>
<td>Refers to when an advertiser only pays when their ad is clicked upon, giving them a visitor to their site - typically from a search engine in pay per click search marketing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost per mil (CPM)</td>
<td>Amount paid for every 1000 views of an advertisement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google AdWords</td>
<td>Google’s PPC program, which allows advertisers to display their adverts on relevant search results and across Google’s content network.</td>
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<tr>
<td>HyperText Markup Language (HTML)</td>
<td>A language read by web browsers. Certain HTML “tags” are used to structure the information and features within a web page. As an example, HTML emails usually contain graphics and can be interactive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet protocol (IP) address</td>
<td>The Internet Protocol (IP) address is an exclusive number which is used to represent every single computer in a network.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet service provider (ISP)</td>
<td>Internet Service Provider – this is the company that is providing you access to the Internet, for example MWEB or AOL.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key performance indicator (KPI)</td>
<td>A metric that indicates whether a website is achieving its goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay per click (PPC)</td>
<td>PPC is advertising on search engines where the advertiser pays only for each click on their advert.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popup</td>
<td>Unrequested window that opens on top of the currently viewed window.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracking</td>
<td>Measuring the effectiveness of a campaign by collecting and evaluating statistics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracking code</td>
<td>A piece of code that tracks a user’s interaction and movement through a website.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Traditional media</td>
<td>Newspapers, magazines, television and publishing houses are the realm of traditional media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unique selling point (USP)</td>
<td>Unique selling point (or proposition) - what makes your offering different to your competitors’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viral video</td>
<td>This is a video that becomes immensely popular, leading to its spread through word-of-mouth on the Internet via email, social networks and other hosting websites.</td>
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8.3 history

Online advertising rapidly followed the developing Internet. As consumers are spending more time online, and hours spent on the Internet are eclipsing other media, the medium becomes increasingly important to any advertiser.

According to Wikipedia, the first clickable banner advert was sold to a law firm in 1993 by Global Network Navigator. HotWired, an early web magazine, was the first to sell advertising space in large quantities to a number of advertisers. One of the first of these was AT&T (a US telecoms company), which went online in October 1994.

![Figure 8.1 An early banner ad for AT&T.](image)

This was part of a campaign that AT&T was running to promote the Internet to consumers, and included television and outdoor advertising. Believe it or not, this was cutting edge back in '94!

In 1996, the interactive advert was born. HP’s Shockwave “Pong” banner was the first rich media advert: you could play Pong in the banner. This ushered in a new wave of advertising, where users could interact with an advert without leaving the page they were visiting.

![Figure 8.2 The first rich media advert: HP’s shockwave “Pong”. Source: University of Pennsylvania](image)

8.4 how it works

Advertising, whether online or offline has a number of objectives:

- Building brand awareness and increasing share of voice in the market place.
- Reaching new customers and creating consumer demand.
- Informing consumers of the advertiser’s ability to satisfy that demand and develop brand loyalty.
- Driving direct response and sales.

Building brand awareness

Making people aware of a brand or product is an important long-term goal for any marketer. Once customers know about the brand, the marketer has taken the first step towards gaining the customer’s trust and patronage. The better known a brand is the more business they can do. And the ultimate goal is to do more business and sell more of the product or service.

Online, creative advertising or banner advertising is largely visual, making it an ideal channel for promoting brand collateral. The visual strengths can be communicated well through this medium.

Creating consumer demand

Creating consumer demand is a three step process: inform, persuade and remind. Consumers can’t want what they don’t know about. Advertising needs to convince consumers about what they should want and why they should want it. Modern online advertising provides a great way to communicate the unique selling points (USPs) of a product, thereby helping stimulate demand and reminding consumers about the product and why they want it.

Satisfying consumer demand

Once the consumer is aware of and wants a product, they need to find out how to satisfy that desire. If brand building has been effective, they will know that a particular brand exists. At this point it is important for the marketer to show the consumer how their particular brand or product will best meet that need.
Driving direct response and sales

All forms of digital marketing need to drive traffic and sales in the long-term. However, the immediacy of online advertising also drives traffic and sales in the short and medium terms. Unlike traditional media advertising, online advertising can turn the potential customer into an actual customer right there and then. What’s more, it is possible to measure accurately how effective the online advertising campaign has been in this regard.

The key differentiator

Online advertising is able to drive instant sales and conversions. Unlike other advertising mediums, the consumer can go from advert to merchant in one easy click. Because of the connected nature of the Internet, online activities are highly trackable and measurable, which makes it possible to target adverts and to accurately track and gauge the efficacy of the advertising. Each display advert can be tracked for success.

8.4.1 How to Show Your Message: types of display advertising

There are many different ways to display messages online, and as technology develops, so does online advertising. Here are some of the most common:

Interstitial banners

These are banners shown between pages on a website. As you click from one page to another, you are shown this advert before the next page is displayed. Sometimes the advert can be closed.

Pop-ups and Pop-unders

As the name suggests, these are adverts which pop up, or under, the web page being viewed. They open in a new, smaller window. You will see a pop-up straight away, but will probably only become aware of a pop-under after you close your browser window.

These were very prominent in the early days of online advertising, but audience annoyance means that there are now “pop-up blockers” built into most good web browsers. This can be problematic as sometimes a website will legitimately use a pop-up to display information to the user.

Floating advert

This advert appears in a layer over the content, but is not in a separate window. Usually, the user can close this advert. In fact, best practice dictates that a prominent close button should be included on the advert, usually in the top right hand corner. Floating adverts are created with DHTML or Flash, and float in a layer above the site’s content for a few seconds. Often, the animation ends by disappearing into a banner advert on the page.

Wallpaper advert

This advert changes the background of the web page being viewed. Usually, it is not possible to clickthrough this advert. The effect of these adverts is difficult to measure as there is no clickthrough, and its chief purpose is branding as the branded page will be visible so consistently.
8.4.3 How to Pay: payment models for display advertising

As well as a variety of mediums, there are also a number of different payment models for display advertising.

**CPI or CPM**

CPI stands for cost per impression. This means the advertiser pays each time the advert appears on the publisher’s page. The most common way of referring to this model is CPM or cost per thousand impressions (the letter M is the Roman numeral for a thousand). This is how a campaign is normally priced when brand awareness or exposure is the primary goal.

CPMs for Rich Media adverts are usually higher than for standard media adverts. This is often based on file size.
CPM favours the publisher, while CPA favours the advertiser. Sometimes, a hybrid of the two payment models is pursued.

Typically, high traffic, broad audience websites will offer CPM advertising. Examples include web portals such as www.yahoo.com or news sites like www.cnn.com.

Figure 8.7 CNN.com is an example of a website that offers CPM advertising.

Niche websites with a targeted audience are more likely to offer CPA advertising to advertisers with an appropriate product. These can also fall under the umbrella of affiliate marketing.

Types of advertising can be seen on a scale from more intrusive (and thus potentially annoying to the consumer) to less intrusive. In the same way, payment models can be scaled from those that favour the publisher to those that favour the advertiser.

When planning a campaign, it is important to know how the advertising will be paid for and what kinds of advertising are offered by publishers. A lot of this can be solved by using a company which specialises in advert serving, media planning and media buying.

8.4.4 Advertising Networks and Advertising Exchanges

An advertising network is a group of websites on which adverts can be purchased through a single sales entity. It could be a collection of sites owned by the same publisher (e.g. AOL, CNN, Sports Illustrated are all owned by AOL/Time Warner) or it could be an affiliation of sites that share a representative.
Ad servers provide a consistent counting methodology across the entire campaign enabling the advertiser to gain an "apples to apples" comparison of performance across the entire media schedule, which includes multiple websites. This ensures the advertiser gets what they are paying for, and avoids fraudulent activities, like click-fraud, as a good third-party ad server should be audited.

The ad server also allows sophisticated targeting of display advertising. Examples of third-party ad servers include Double Click, Atlas and MediaMind.

### 8.4.6 Tracking

The trackability of online advertising is what makes it so superior to conventional advertising in a bid to boost brand awareness. Not only can an advertiser tell how many times an advert was seen (impressions), but also how many times the advert was successful in sending visitors to the advertised website (clicks). As discussed in the chapter on conversion optimisation, the tracking needs to continue on the website to determine how successful the advert has been in creating more revenue for the website (conversions).

As well as tracking adverts being served and clicked on, advertising networks can also provide information about the people who saw the advert, as well as those who acted on it. Here is some of the information that can be provided:

- Connection type
- Browser
- Operating System
- Time of day
- ISP

Many third-party ad servers will set a cookie on impression of an advert, not only on clickthrough, so it is possible to track latent conversions (within the cookie period). Simply put, not only can third-party ad servers track the post click data, but also post view data: when a user sees an advert, does not click on it, but goes to the website after viewing the advert (either by typing in the URL, or searching for the site).

And the best thing? Using this information, the ad server can target the display of advertising, helping advertisers to optimise campaigns and get the most from the advertising spend.
Privacy is a big deal, and the information collected is kept anonymous. Cookies are not only used by websites for tracking. Cookies also allow websites to “remember” a visitor’s preferences, such as language and location. Where a visitor will not accept the cookie from an advertising network, either by opting out or because their browser deletes cookies, many ad servers will rely on the IP address of the visitor to track which websites are visited. Even though the information is anonymous, there are consumers who do not like having their browsing habits analysed so that better advertising can be served to them.

Targeting and Optimising
Ad servers serve adverts across a number of websites, and can track a user visiting websites using cookies or IP addresses.

This means that ad servers can offer advertisers:

- **Frequency Capping**: the ad server will limit the number of times a user sees the same advert in a session or time period.
- **Sequencing**: the network can ensure that a user sees adverts in a particular order.
- **Exclusivity**: ensure that adverts from direct competitors are not shown on the same page.
- **Roadblocks**: allowing an advertiser to own 100% of the advertising inventory on a page.

The ad server can also target adverts based on the business rules of the advertiser or based on the profiles of the users:

- **Geo-Targeting**: online advertising has the ability to target markets by country, province or city, and can even drill them down to something as specific as their IP address.
- **Network / Browser Type**: markets can further be targeted via networks or browser types such as Mozilla Firefox, Internet Explorer, Google Chrome and Apple Safari.
- **Connection Type**: users can be segmented and targeted according to their Internet connection type, e.g. whether they use broadband or dial up connections.
- **Day and Time**: advertisers can choose the time of day or day of the week when their adverts are shown. Advertisers can specify when their campaign should air, down to the minute. This usually depends on the client’s objective for the campaign or the product itself.
- **Social Serving**: websites gather demographic data about users and then serve each user with targeted and relevant advertising. For example, Facebook will allow advertisers to select specific characteristics of users who will be shown an advert.
- **Behavioural Targeting**: the ad server uses the profile of a user (built up over previous websites visited) to determine which adverts to show during a given visit. Ad servers can base this profile on cookies or on IP addresses. For example, the ad server may choose to show adverts for pet insurance on a news page to a user who has visited the pets and animals section of a general media site previously. Another way of behavioural targeting is to set up parameters to determine when a certain advert needs to be shown. For example: if the user has clicked on a banner advertising a test drive, and the user actually booked the test drive, the next time they see an advert from the advertiser, a different advert will be shown because the user already responded to the previous advert.

Contextual Advertising: the ad server infers the optimum adverts to serve based on the content of page. For example, on an article about mountain bike holidays in Europe, the ad server would serve adverts for new mountain bikes, or adverts from travel companies offering flights to Europe, or perhaps adverts for adventure travel insurance.

Knowing the various types of display options and payment models available are all very well, but you might be wondering how to put this all together as you plan your campaign. The very first thing you need to determine when planning display advertising is the goal of your campaign. Are you embarking on a branding campaign, or is your primary focus direct response?

Having determined the goals of your campaign, identify the key performance indicators (KPIs) that will let you know if you are succeeding.

Online advertising is an acquisition channel. It does not require that users actively seek an interaction, as PPC advertising and email marketing do. So, it is crucial that the adverts are placed in front of the audience that is most likely to convert.

**Figure 8.8 Contextual advertising can be misunderstood in the inappropriate context.**
The future of online advertising

While we have become used to the Internet as a free medium where we can read and interact with any content we want, it is the fact that it is an advertiser’s medium that keeps it free. And that means that as technologies evolve and the way we interact with content changes, so advertising follows.

Previously the level of interaction a web user had with a website could be measured by the number of pages of that website the user viewed. Now, technology such as AJAX and rich media such as video mean that the time spent on a web page can be more meaningful than the number of pages viewed. The key word here is “engagement”, and technology and data analysis is working towards being able to determine how websites can quantify the level of engagement with a viewer.

A little online research will reveal plenty of commentary declaring the decline of display advertising. Increasingly, consumers are becoming both weary and wary of advertising. Clickthrough rates on banners are dropping, so the effectiveness of display advertising is being questioned by some. With the focus in digital marketing on tracking and measuring response and engagement, should a company spend money on less measurable activities such as “brand building”, where they are paying on a CPM basis?

Consider this: anecdotal evidence shows that banner advertising can increase clickthrough rates on contextual adverts by 249% (Godin, 2006).

Using third-party ad servers and post impression tracking, the effect of different advertising and marketing channels on each other can be observed. Banner advertising can see an increase in search volume, for example.

What does this tell us? Measurement should take place across all channels, and no channel should be utilised in isolation. The best results will be gained through an integrated and holistic approach to digital marketing.

8.7 the good and the bad

Advantages of Online Advertising

Banner Ads and their Similarity with Traditional Media

Digital marketers regularly bemoan the fact that it’s often difficult to educate the market about the value of Internet marketing techniques. Traditional buyers of advertising have been conditioned in a certain fashion and have come to understand advertising in a certain way.
Banner advertising goes a long way towards bridging the advertising divide. Adverts have a set size, they can look very similar to print adverts and they occupy a particular bit of real estate in a publication with a particular number of views. It’s easy to understand and it does the things buyers are familiar with.

Bottom line - if done correctly, online advertising builds brand awareness and increases sales!

Images - Display can offer a rich brand building experience
Some campaigns are better suited to having images rather than the plain text of a PPC campaign (although recently PPC image and video adverts have been introduced in the USA). Consider the following types of campaigns:

- **Promoting travel packages.** What stirs more emotion - an image of a tropical paradise or the words "tropical paradise"?
- **Build a brand within a specific sphere.** Use banner advertising to brand the websites of every major player in that niche.
- **Running a competition.** Keep the target market’s eye on the prize.
- **Launching an exciting new sports car with a Call to Action.** Test drive it now - or interactive rich media that highlight all the exciting new features as you mouseover that part of the car on the image.
- **Digital shadow.** Using banner adverts that shadow the above the line activity to drive the message both on and offline.

Interactivity
Since banners can contain rich media, they offer levels of interactivity that other forms of advertising cannot achieve. It allows your target market to not only see your banner, but to play with it too. Interaction builds a bond and improves the chances of the consumer remembering your brand tomorrow. Cognitive learning is a powerful outcome of interactive display advertising.

Modern online advertising is able to bring together a number of other online marketing tactics such as animations, games, video and Flash.

- **A few years ago, Flash microsites were all the rage.** Now the same functionality can exist within the advert. This includes filling in a form or playing a game within the advert, there’s no need to be taken to a separate page.
- **Viral Marketing:** clever viral marketing games or “send to a friend” functionality from within the advert.
- **Video:** check out video previews or trailers from within the advert.

Figure 8.9 YouTube can be used creatively to promote different brands and products.

Measurability and Data Gathering
Banner ads, like all digital marketing tactics, are measurable. Track clickthrough rates and you get an idea of exactly how many people are responding to your Call to Action. Some publishers even have the ability to do post-click tracking i.e. you can track the user all the way to a sale if that is the purpose of the advert.

An Online Publishers Association (OPA) study revealed that of the 80% of viewers who reported to have watched a video advert online, 52% have taken some sort of action, including checking out a website (31%), searching for more information (22%), going into a store (15%) or actually making a purchase (12%).

8.7.2 Disadvantages of Online Advertising

Technical obstacles
The nature of a lot of display advertising is intrusive, so pop up blockers can often prevent adverts from being served as they were intended by the advertisers.

Connection speed
Bandwidth can also be an issue, although this is a shrinking problem. However campaigns should be planned according to demographics in determining the richness (and investment) of interaction. For example, heart disease medication is likely to appeal to the older community, with less money and slower connection speeds.
Technology allows for increased levels of interaction within an advert, and for advertising tailored to engagement media such as online videos and social network applications.

8.9 the bigger picture

Offline advertising and marketing campaigns can be adapted for an online audience, so as to ensure maximum brand exposure. It is very effective in enhancing offline marketing and advertising activity and in ensuring a wider reach.

As mentioned, online advertising can be used as an acquisition channel, reaching out to a new audience. It can be used to initiate a buying cycle and customer relationship, which then plays out across other online channels. Addressing advertising and other channels to complement each other will result in a consistent message, and optimum results. Online advertising can be used to reach a large audience, and then other digital marketing tactics can be used to further refine this audience.

Display advertising and affiliate marketing go hand in hand. Affiliate networks also act as advertising networks, allowing for advertising to be purchased on a performance basis.

When seeding new products and viral campaigns, display advertising can be used to reach a wide audience at a low cost. It can expose a campaign to many new users, and increase the chance that those who are most likely to pass on a message receive it in the first place. Display advertising also supports other advertising and marketing channels, such as search advertising and marketing.

8.10 case study: Hyundai and MediaMind

Hyundai needed a way to be present for users during their purchasing cycle. Knowing that many users begin their car search online, they decided to take advantage of rich display adverts that could cut through the clutter in combination with a search strategy.

The aim was to encourage the intent to purchase and to generate test drives at the lowest cost per lead possible. Hyundai’s agency, Reprise Media, decided to take advantage of video enhanced rich media served by MediaMind in order to evoke a showroom experience and grab the attention of potential customers. The rich media ads were placed on automotive sites, with the video features drawing viewers into the experience. The influence of display on the relevant search channels was tracked as well as search and display conversions using MediaMind’s Channel Connect for Search.
Figure 8.10 The rich-media Hyundai advert.

It was found that combining search and display increased the conversion rate by 127%, in comparison to search alone. The display campaign also ensured that people were using campaign specific keywords in order to conduct their searches. While 19% of conversions were triggered solely by search, 53% were triggered solely by display. Users being exposed to both channels resulted in 28% of conversions.

**case study questions**

1. Why do you think that combining search and display positively affected the conversion rate?
2. Think about your own behaviour when browsing online. Do you pay attention to display adverts? Is there a difference between the ones that catch your eye and those that don’t?
3. What is the difference between the mindset of someone responding to a display advert and someone conducting a web search?

**chapter questions**

1. Online banner advertising and outdoor display advertising both use images to try to increase sales. In planning, both need to consider placement so as to be seen by their most likely audience. What are the key differences?
2. Why is display advertising an effective acquisition channel?
3. Go to www.wheels24.co.za and www.thetimes.co.za. What advertising can you find on the front page of these two websites? What products are being advertised, and how are they being advertised? What can you infer about the target market for these products?

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• www.iab.com - Interactive Advertising Board.
• www.nma.co.uk – UK industry focused advertising articles.
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Seth Godin: Author Purple Cow, Permission Marketing and Linchpin

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Jaco Meiring: Digital - Investec

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